

# The Legacy of Ancient India

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## Lecture Outline

### I. Goal of the Lecture

- Introduce the theme of introspective self-quest as the unique contribution of Ancient Indian civilization
- By looking at some of the main religious texts trace the emergence and evolution of this theme
- Explain certain basic concepts needed to understand this theme and its evolution

### II. Geography and History

#### 1. Indus Valley Civilization (circa 2600-1900 BCE): Harappa and Mohenjodaro

- (A) Its River-based Nature
- (B) Its People
- (C) Its Culture

#### 2. The Aryan Civilization

- (A) The Arrival of Aryan Invaders
- (B) The Nature and Spread of Aryan Civilization
- (C) Its People

### III. Religion and Philosophy: HINDU DHARMA (HINDUISM): The most Prominent Religion of the Aryan Civilization

#### 1. Main Texts

- (A) Vedas and their parts (circa 1800-200 BCE)
- (B) *Mahabharata* & The *Bhagavad-Gita* (circa 400 BCE – 400 AD)

#### 2. Main Concepts

- (A) *Dharma* & Religion
- (B) Rebirth and Immortality of the Self (Soul)
- (C) The Karma Theory
- (D) The Four Castes: *Brahmin*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaisya*, *sudra* and the Outcaste

#### 3. Main Themes

- (A) Early Vedic: Sacrificial Ritualism
- (B) Upanisadic or Later Vedic: Introspective Quest for Self-knowledge
- (C) *Bhagavad-Gita*: Synthesization & Contextualization the main Vedic Themes

### IV. More on *Bhagavad-Gita*: The Hindu Bible

1. Its Metaphysics of three *gunas* (qualities) as explaining the diversity of castes
2. Its Ethics of Non-attachment and Disinterested Action
3. Its Idea of Three Yogas: *jnana* (Knowledge), *Karma* (Action), *Bhakti* (Devotion)